

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 013125

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 012682 ACTION ALL NATO CAPITALS
TOKYO CANBERRA WELLINGTON MOSCOW INFO BEIRUT 19 JAN

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 012682

TOSEC 258

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: SECDEF STATEMENT ON STRATEGIC FORCES

REF: (A) PARIS 1001; (B) USNATO 0145; (C) BONN 735

(D) USNATO 0223

1. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE MAY BE DRAWN ON BY POSTS IN RESPONDING TO QUERIES ON SECDEF SCHLESINGER'S COMMENTS ON STRATEGIC FORCES BEFORE OVERSEAS WRITERS JANUARY 10. IT SHOULD NOT BE VOLUNTEERED. INFORMAL TRANSCRIPT THESE REMARKS WERE CARRIED IN WIRELESS FILE (IPS-EUR-651, JANUARY 11).

2. ITS MAIN POINTS REFLECT ADMINISTRATION POLICY ON STRATEGIC FORCES, AND DESIRE TO EXPLAIN POLICY MORE FULLY TO PUB-

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GIC FORCES, AND DESIRE TO EXPLAIN POLICY MORE FULLY TO PUB-

LIC: SECOND, ITS TWO MAJOR THEMES ARE NOT NEW: (A) THE NECESSITY TO ACHIEVE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN POSSIBLE EMPLOYMENT OF STRATEGIC FORCES, AND (B) THE DETERMINATION

OF US TO RETAIN A STRATEGIC POSITION OF ESSENTIAL EQUIVALENCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION, IF POSSIBLE THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS BUT IF NECESSARY BY UNILATERAL MEASURES.

3. WITH RESPECT TO FLEXIBILITY, SECRETARY ELABORATED ON POINTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN PRESIDENTIAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS REPORTS, AND WHICH SECRETARY

SCHLESINGER HAS MADE HIMSELF, MOST RECENTLY AT NATO MINISTRIALS. THUS US INTEREST IN DEVELOPING MORE FLEXIBLE TARGETING DOCTRINE SHOULD BE FAMILIAR TO ALLIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN NATO. WHILE SOME PRESS REPORTS ARE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON THIS POINT, SHIFT IN TARGETING IS ONE OF EMPHASIS. US HAS ALWAYS TARGETED A NUMBER OF MILITARY TARGETS AS WELL AS URBAN INDUSTRIAL CENTERS. SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPHASIZING MILITARY TARGETS RATHER THAN CIVILIAN. INCREASED WARHEAD INVENTORY RESULTING FROM MIRV DEPLOYMENT PERMITS WIDER TARGET COVERAGE; INCREASES IN ACCURACY PERMIT GREATER DISCRIMINATION. THE AIM OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S NEW EMPHASIS IS TO ENHANCE DETERRENCE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS SHIFT IN EMPHASIS IS DESTABILIZING; IT DOES NOT REPEAT NOT PRESAGE "FIRST-STRIKE DOCTRINE".

IT SHOULD ALSO BE STRESSED THAT FLEXIBILITY IS NOT VIEWED BY US AS DECOUPLING STRATEGIC FORCE FROM DEFENSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT ON CONTRARY IT IS AN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN EXTENDED DETERRENCE.

4. THE SECRETARY MADE THE POINT THAT THE SIZING OF OUR STRATEGIC FORCES WILL BE INFLUENCED BY WHAT HAPPENS AT SALT AND IS SEPARABLE FROM OUR TARGETING DOCTRINE. IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT ALTERATIONS IN OUR TARGETING STRATEGIES WE DO NOT HAVE TO INCREASE THE NUMBERS OR THE THROW WEIGHT OF WHAT WE HAVE IN OUR STRATEGIC ARSENAL. THE SECRETARY LATER DISCUSSED SEVERAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. THESE PROGRAMS
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ARE NOT DESIGNED TO MATCH THE SOVIET ON EVERY SPECIFIC FRONT, BUT RATHER TO INSURE (1) THAT US CAN MAINTAIN AN INVULNERABLE SECOND-STRIKE FORCE, (2) THAT THE US AND THE USSR HAVE A GENERAL SYMMETRY IN NUCLEAR OPTIONS, AND (3) THAT THERE IS PERCEIVED EQUALITY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. IN LINE WITH HIS DISCUSSION OF ACCURACY, THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE US CANNOT ALLOW THE SOVIETS TO DEVELOP CAPABILITIES, SUCH AS THEY APPEAR TO BE DOING

IN REGARD TO ICBM SILO-KILLING CAPACITY, WHICH WOULD OPEN UP A MAJOR SET OF SOVIET OPTIONS THAT THE US COULD NOT MATCH. THE PURPOSE OF OUR SALT NEGOTIATIONS IS THE LIMITING OF STRATEGIC FORCES -- BOTH IN TERMS OF SIZING AND CAPABILITIES -- BUT IF THE SALT TALKS FAIL TO REACH KEY AGREEMENTS, THEN THE US MUST BE IN A POSITION TO HAVE ESSENTIAL EQUIVALENCE IN STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES.

5. ON THIS LATTER POINT, AS SECDEF STRESSED, ONE IMPERATIVE OF US STRATEGIC POLICY IS MAINTENANCE OF OVERALL EQUIVALENCE WITH SOVIET UNION. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL WE PERMIT SOVIETS TO ACHIEVE OR APPEAR TO ACHIEVE SUPERIORITY IN STRATEGIC ARMS. WE REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE THROUGH NEGOTIATING LIMITATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT REDUCTIONS IN SALT. THIS REMAINS OUR PREFERRED COURSE. IF THE SOVIET UNION IS PREPARED TO REDUCE ARMS "WE CAN ACCOMMODATE THEM". THIS SYMMETRY IN FORCE AND FLEXIBILITY CAN EXIST AT A VARIETY OF POSSIBLE LEVELS: WE WOULD BE WILLING TO "PUT A LID ON" AT PRESENT OR MUCH LOWER LEVELS, PROVIDED ONLY THAT "ESSENTIAL EQUIVALENCE" IS PRESERVED. BUT IF THIS DOES NOT PROVE POSSIBLE, USG WILL TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO MAINTAIN EQUIVALENCE THROUGH OUR OWN EFFORTS. SECDEF STRESSED THAT OVERALL POWER REPRESENTED BY OUR STRATEGIC FORCES MUST BE A MATCH FOR OVERALL POWER OF THE SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES.

6. ABOVE IS INTERIM GUIDANCE WHICH YOU SHOULD USE ONLY TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS WHICH MAY BE RAISED WITH YOU. MORE DETAILED SCENARIO FOR INFORMING ALLIES OF CHANGES IN US PLANNING FOR EMPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS COMPLETED. MEANWHILE, WOULD BE USEFUL TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON QUESTIONS RAISED WITH YOU TO ASSIST US IN PREPARING FURTHER GUIDANCE. RUSH
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